

Ishant Sharma's Best Test Spells Against England

When we talk about Indian fast bowlers who evolved with time and grit, **Ishant Sharma** is a name that always stands tall. From being a raw teenager troubling Ricky Ponting to becoming India's senior-most pacer in Test cricket, Ishant's journey has been filled with ups and downs. But if there's one team against whom he truly left his mark in red-ball cricket, it is **England**.

Across multiple tours both home and away, **Ishant Sharma's best Test spells against England** have played crucial roles in shaping some of India's most iconic victories. In this blog, we'll take a closer look at those standout spells, how he matured as a bowler over the years, and why his performances against England deserve a special place in Indian Test cricket history.



The Rise of a Relentless Warrior

Ishant Sharma made his Test debut in 2007, but it was over the next decade that he truly evolved. While early in his career he struggled with consistency, his persistence and experience eventually turned him into one of India's most dependable fast bowlers, especially in overseas

conditions. Against England, his spells were often match-turning — a testament to his ability to rise to the occasion.

1. 7/74 at Lord's, 2014 – A Spell for the Ages

If there's one performance that defines **Ishant Sharma's best Test spells against England**, it is this one — the **famous 7-wicket haul at Lord's** in 2014.

- **Match Situation:** England were chasing 319 on the final day.
- **Pitch Condition:** Dry and wearing, not particularly fast-bowler friendly.
- **What Ishant Did:** He changed the game by bowling short and getting the English batsmen to fend uncomfortably.
- **Victims Included:** Moeen Ali, Joe Root, Matt Prior, Ben Stokes — all bounced out.

It was a bold strategy encouraged by MS Dhoni, and Ishant executed it to perfection. India went on to win the match — their first victory at Lord's in 28 years. That spell not only earned Ishant the **Player of the Match** award but also re-established him as a leader of India's pace attack.

"We were not expecting him to bowl bouncers like that. It was intimidating," said Joe Root after the match.

2. 5/51 at Nottingham, 2011 – The Silent Strangler

In a match where India were under pressure, Ishant stood up once again with a **5-wicket haul** at Trent Bridge in 2011. Though India lost the Test, Ishant's spell in the first innings was one of the few positives.

- He bowled with pace and movement.
- He removed key players like Ian Bell and Eoin Morgan.
- His spell showed he was capable of leading the attack away from home.

This match is often overlooked, but Ishant's consistency and ability to bowl long spells proved vital in helping India stay competitive.

3. 4/62 at Chennai, 2021 – Experience on Turning Tracks

By the time England visited India in 2021, Ishant was the most experienced bowler in the squad. The conditions in Chennai heavily favored spinners, yet Ishant's performance in the first Test stood out.

- He picked up **4 wickets**, including key top-order batsmen like Rory Burns and Dan Lawrence.
- Despite the pitch offering little pace or bounce, he maintained impeccable lines and length.
- His reverse swing and control were crucial in keeping England's score in check.

While India lost that match, Ishant's adaptability on spin-friendly tracks was commendable and showed why he was still valuable even on subcontinental pitches.

4. 3/53 at The Oval, 2018 – Precision in Patches

India's 2018 tour of England saw Ishant as the leader of a young pace attack featuring Bumrah and Shami. At The Oval, his **3-wicket haul** in the first innings was notable for its discipline and smart bowling.

- He dismissed Alastair Cook, England's most reliable opener, with a beauty.
- Ishant kept a tight lid on the scoring rate, creating pressure that led to wickets at the other end.

Though India lost the match and series, Ishant's consistent spells were one of the few shining lights throughout the tour.

Consistency Across Series

One thing that separates Ishant from many others is his **longevity**. From the 2007 series at home to the 2021 tour, **Ishant Sharma vs England in Test cricket** became a battle of patience and experience.

Career Stats vs England (as of his last Test in 2021):

- **Matches:** 25

- **Wickets:** 67
- **Best Figures:** 7/74 (Lord's, 2014)
- **Average:** Around 33
- **5-wicket hauls:** 2

These numbers might not scream domination, but look deeper and you'll find that most of Ishant's wickets came in difficult conditions and crucial phases of matches.

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How Ishant Grew Over Time

● Tactical Evolution

Early in his career, Ishant relied heavily on bounce and raw pace. But by 2018, he had transformed into a bowler who could move the ball both ways, adjust lengths, and set up batsmen smartly.

● Patience and Persistence

Even when wickets didn't come easily, Ishant kept plugging away. Against England, he often bowled long, disciplined spells — building pressure and allowing others to strike.

● Team Player

As India built a world-class pace unit, Ishant often played second fiddle to Bumrah or Shami. But his control and ability to take out left-handers made him a vital part of the strategy.

The Legacy of Ishant Sharma vs England

While India has produced many great fast bowlers in recent years, **Ishant Sharma's best Test spells against England** were instrumental in changing India's overseas image. No longer were they reliant on spinners alone. With Ishant leading the pace battery, India began winning Tests in England, competing on equal terms.

His spell at Lord's in 2014 will forever be etched in cricketing history. Not just for the wickets, but for what it represented — India's fast-bowling coming of age.

Conclusion

Ishant Sharma vs England in Test cricket is a story of perseverance, growth, and big-match brilliance. From fiery spells in seaming English conditions to smart reverse-swinging deliveries on dusty Indian pitches, he delivered time and again.

As fans, we often remember flashy innings and big five-fors. But Ishant's legacy lies in the grind — in those long spells where he held one end, waited for the moment, and struck like a true workhorse.

In an era where Indian pacers are making headlines across formats, let's not forget the man who paved the way. **Ishant Sharma's best Test spells against England** deserve to be remembered — not just for their numbers, but for their heart.

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